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State Historical Society volunteers recognized

PIERRE, S.D. -- The people most important to the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre were recently honored: volunteers.

"Much of what we do would not be possible without volunteers," said Jay D. Vogt, director of the South Dakota State Historical Society, headquartered at the Cultural Heritage Center. "Volunteers greet visitors who come to the Cultural Heritage Center, tell visitors about the museum in the Cultural Heritage Center, help visitors in the Heritage Stores, guide tours, teach classes to area pupils, work on projects in the Archives and assist at special events."

Approximately 50 people donated a total of 3,313.5 hours at the Cultural Heritage Center and Heritage Store at the Capitol in 2011.

"We value the contributions our volunteers make to the Cultural Heritage Center and to our visitors," said Patricia Miller, president of the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, the nonprofit fundraising partner of the SDSHS.

Volunteers were honored for both their hours of service and years of service at a luncheon at RedRossa Italian Grille in Pierre.

Those who volunteered 100 hours or more at the Cultural Heritage Center or Heritage Store at the Capitol last year were: Marv Paulson, 17 years; LaVer Holland, 12 years; Clara Shelbourn, 10 years; Karen Allan, nine years; Connie Grittner, seven years; Art Rezac, six years; Colleen Weiss, five years; Carolyn Coonrod and Doris Powell, four years; Gail Lyngstad and Betty Meintsma, three years; Gloria Welk, Carol Jennings and Billie Taylor, two years; and Ruth Rehn, one year. Volunteers receive a specially design Sioux Horse Effigy pin the first time they volunteer 100 hours or more in a year. They receive silver feathers to be placed on the pin each year after that.

Honored for their years of service were: Nancy Thomas, Bob Travis and Trudy Evenstad, 21 years; Homer Harding, Bev Huckins, Sandra Kangas, Gladys Larsen, Marv Paulson and Clara Shelbourn, 15 to 19 years; Judy Bassett, Jan Deis, Art Rezac, Colleen Weiss, Juanita Kangas, Karen Allan and LaVer Holland, 10 to 14 years; Carol Axtman, Nancy Baker, Tim Bjork, Alverde Daniel, Andy Deis, Connie Grittner, Donna Gutenkauf, Gail Lyngstad, Sandra Nelson, Carol Owens, Del Paulson, Linda Peterson and Doris Powell, five to nine years; and Carolyn Coonrod, Gayle Drake, Carol Jennings, Joan Likness, Betty Meintsma, Marlys Nellerroe, Marilyn Nugent, Ruth Rehn, Don Shields, Karen Stein, Billie Taylor, Bill Van Duzer, Gloria Welk and Mike Wyne, two to four years. New volunteers in 2011 were Mike Baker, Betsey DeLoache, Dagne Ode, Jim Stein and Gary Whitney.

All the volunteers received a certificate of appreciation. In addition, Marv Paulson, LaVer Holland, Nancy Thomas, Bob Travis and Trudy Evenstad received limited-edition Jon Crane prints of the Capitol in appreciation for their commitment to the Cultural Heritage Center.

A variety of volunteer opportunities are available at the Cultural Heritage Center and at the Heritage Store in the Capitol that is operated by the Foundation. Most of the volunteer opportunities take place during the weekday. People can volunteer once a month to once a week or more, depending on their preference.

“Volunteers have the opportunity to meet people from all over the United States and the world,” Miller said. “They often are the people that visitors associate most with the Cultural Heritage Center, and can make a visitor’s day.”

For more information about volunteer opportunities at the Cultural Heritage Center, contact volunteer coordinator Dorinda Daniel at (605) 773-6006 or dorinda.daniel@state.sd.us.

Editor’s Note: The picture is of 100 hour-plus award winners for 2011 at the Cultural Heritage Center. They are, standing, left to right, Museum Director Jay Smith, SD Historical Society Foundation President Pat Miller, Doris Powell, Betty Meintsma, Ruth Rehn, Billie Taylor, Carol Jennings, Art Rezac, Gloria Welk, Marv Paulson and South Dakota State Historical Society Director Jay D. Vogt; seated, Clara Shelbourn, Colleen Weiss, LaVer Holland and Carolyn Coonrod.

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The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation is a private charitable nonprofit that seeks funding to assist the South Dakota State Historical Society in programming and projects to preserve South Dakota’s history and heritage for future generations.

The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council, and the State Historical Society. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen. The State Historical Society is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society’s world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit www.history.sd.gov for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.